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SPECIAL AGENT

Department of the Treasury
United States Secret Service

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Special Agents of the United States Secret Service are charged with two missions: protection and investigation. During the course of their careers, Special Agents carry out assignments in both of these areas.

Protection

After the assassination of President William McKinley in 1901, the Secret Service was directed by Congress to protect the President of the United States. This duty remains the primary responsibility of the United States Secret Service.

Today Special Agents are authorized by law to protect:

- ☐ **the President, the Vice President, (or other officer next in order of succession to the Office of President), the President-elect and Vice President-elect;**
- ☐ **the immediate families of the above individuals;**
- ☐ **former Presidents and their spouses for their lifetimes, except that protection of a spouse will terminate in the event of remarriage;**
- ☐ **children of former Presidents until age 16;**
- ☐ **visiting heads of foreign states or governments and their spouses traveling with them, other distinguished foreign visitors to the U.S., and official representatives of the U.S. performing special missions abroad;**
- ☐ **major Presidential and Vice Presidential candidates, and within 120 days of the general Presidential election, the spouses of such candidates.**

Investigation

The Secret Service was established in 1865 for the sole purpose of suppressing the counterfeiting of U.S. currency. Over the years its investigative responsibilities have expanded along with the nation's increasingly complex monetary system.

Counterfeiting – Suppressing the counterfeiting of the currency and securities of the United States and of foreign governments remains a primary responsibility of Special Agents. Today the Service also investigates the counterfeiting of certain Government identification documents and devices.

Forgery and Fraud – The Secret Service is responsible for the investigation of stolen or forged U.S. Government checks and bonds. Agents also investigate major cases involving: credit and debit card fraud, computer fraud, automated teller machine fraud, telephone fraud involving long distance calls, and electronic fund transfer fraud.

Training

Special Agents are trained in criminal law and state-of-the-art investigative procedures. All agents receive general investigative training at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Glynco, Georgia, and specialized instruction at Secret Service training facilities in the Washington, D.C., area.

Training includes comprehensive courses in protective techniques, criminal law, criminal investigative procedures, use of scientific investigative devices, first aid, the use of firearms, and defensive measures. Rules of evidence, surveillance techniques, undercover operations, and courtroom demeanor are also studied. Classroom study is supplemented by on-the-job training.

Special Agents regularly participate in advanced in-service training programs throughout their careers.

Employment Opportunities

Although the Secret Service is always interested in qualified applicants, opportunities for Special Agent positions are limited because of high competition and a low attrition rate. Consequently, only the most qualified applicants are appointed.

Newly appointed Special Agents may be assigned to duty stations anywhere in the United States. Throughout their careers, agents may experience frequent travel and reassignments to Secret Service offices located throughout the United States or liaison assignments in foreign countries.

Background Requirements

Prior to being considered for a Special Agent position, candidates must pass the Treasury Enforcement Agent Examination. Candidates may apply at the nearest United States Office of Personnel Management or at the nearest Secret Service field office. A limited number of the most qualified applicants will receive a series of in-depth interviews. They must complete a polygraph examination as a condition of employment, and may be asked to participate in a drug screening program.

Applicants must also undergo a thorough background investigation. Selected applicants should be prepared to wait an extended period of time for vacancies to occur. All appointees must be less than 35 years of age at the time of entrance on duty.

Medical Requirements

Since Special Agents must be in excellent physical condition, applicants must pass a comprehensive medical examination, provided by the Secret Service, prior to appointment. Weight must be in proportion to height. Distant vision must be at least 20/40 in each eye uncorrected and 20/20 in each eye corrected. Near vision must be at least 20/40 corrected.

Educational Requirements

A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in any field of study meets the minimum requirements for appointment at the GS-5 grade level. One additional year of specialized experience, Superior Academic Achievement (defined as a grade point average of 2.9 or higher on a 4.0 scale), or one year of graduate study in a directly-related field meets the requirements for appointment at the GS-7 grade level. In some cases an applicant may be accepted with a minimum of three years of experience, two of which are in criminal investigation, or with a comparable combination of experience and education.

Promotional Opportunities

Eligibility for promotion in the Service is based upon performance. The full performance level for a Special Agent is GS-12. Selection for promotion to positions above the GS-12 level is based on merit and as vacancies occur.

Benefits

- ☐ Low-cost health and life insurance may be obtained through Federal employee programs. Immediate families may be included in health benefit plans.
- ☐ Financial protection is provided, without cost, to agents and their families in the event of job-related injury or death.
- ☐ Annual leave accrues at the rate of 13 to 26 days per year, based on length of employment. Prior federal civilian or military service is creditable.
- ☐ Sick leave accumulates at the rate of 13 days per year without limit.
- ☐ The Secret Service offers comprehensive retirement programs for all employees. Additional retirement credit is granted for prior military or Government service, as authorized.

The United States Secret Service is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

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